



Department of Planning, Building and Code Enforcement
801 North First Street, Room 400
San José, California 95110-1795

Hearing Date/Agenda Number:
P.C. – 8/12/02 Item:

File Number:
GPT02-07-06

Council District and SNI Area:
7 – N/A

Major Thoroughfares Map Number:
100

Assessor's Parcel Number(s):
455-28-012 & 013

Project Manager: Mike Mena

GENERAL PLAN REPORT

2002 SUMMER HEARING

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Amend the Communications Hill Specific Plan to allow for exceptions to the 24 DU/AC minimum density on certain blocks.

TEXT REFERENCE:

Chapter 3.2.b – Communications Hill Specific Plan; Land Use; Multi-Family Housing; Design Standards.

LOCATION: Southerly side of Curtner Avenue, on both sides of the future Communications Hill Boulevard (Communications Hill Planned Community).**ACREAGE:** 60.2

APPLICANT/OWNER:

MTA Properties & Curtner /Summerhill Homes

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW STATUS:

Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the Communications Hill Specific Plan Resolution No. 63624; Certified April 7, 1992.

PLANNING STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt the proposed Text Amendment.

Approved by:

Date:

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION:

CITY COUNCIL ACTION:

CITY DEPARTMENT AND PUBLIC AGENCY COMMENTS RECEIVED:

- Department of Public Works (DPW) – The subject site is located within a flood zone and existing sewer capacity may be inadequate for development in the area. Improvements identified within the Communications Hill Specific Plan address resolving these issues.
- Valley Transportation Authority (VTA) – Future development of the site will be required to incorporate bus stop improvements.

GENERAL CORRESPONDENCE:

None.

ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This is a privately initiated amendment to the Communications Hill Specific Plan text to allow for slight exceptions to the 24 dwelling unit per acre minimum density on certain blocks as specified within the Communications Hill Specific Plan. The area is located on the southerly side of Curtner Avenue on both sides of the planned Communications Hill Boulevard (also known as Dairy Hill). The property would remain designated Multi-Family Residential (24-40 DU/AC). The applicant has stated that due to certain geological constraints, a project would not always be able to meet the minimum density set by the Specific Plan on certain blocks within the Dairy Hill area and therefore, there is a need to amend the text of the Specific Plan.

BACKGROUND

In 1992 the Communications Hill Specific Plan was adopted to create a sizable new urban neighborhood, which would be interconnected by a combination of streets, stairs and pathways. At the same time, the City Council amended the San Jose 2020 General Plan to add the Communications Hill Planned Community in order to incorporate the major features of the Specific Plan directly into the General Plan.

The specific plan is a long-range set of policies for land use and development in a defined area. The Specific Plan has enabled the City of San Jose, in coordination with representatives of the Communications Hill Specific Plan Task Force and property owners, to identify the desired background, vision, and character for the area. The plan also addresses allowed uses and the development criteria at a level of detail beyond the scope of the General Plan.

As mentioned above, the applicant has stated that due to certain site constraints the minimum density originally set by the Specific Plan cannot be met in all planned blocks. The applicant has worked with staff in determining particular blocks that may be considered on a case-by-case basis for a reduction to the minimum density per block (see Figure 1). While a slight reduction to the minimum density required under the Specific Plan may be allowed upon the approval of this amendment request (i.e., no lower than 17 DU/AC), the intent for a multi-family residential, urban development should not be jeopardized.

Existing and Surrounding Land Uses

The subject site is currently vacant. Properties north of the site and across Curtner Avenue consist of residential and light industrial uses (bus depot). East of the site is the Oak Hill Cemetery and properties to the south are vacant. The western boundary of the site consists of a mobile home park, vacant land and Highway 87.

ANALYSIS**Land Use Compatibility**

The issue of adjacent land use compatibility has been addressed by the Communications Hill Specific Plan and Communications Hill Planned Community which specifically designate this property as Multi-Family Residential. The multi-family units are intended to provide a mix of housing types to create an architecturally diverse neighborhood. Typical housing types include

townhouses with tuck-under parking, stacked walk-up flats, small podium apartment houses, and mid-rise apartment buildings. The proposed text amendment would not result in a change to the overall intent of the land use designation.

Although the subject amendment may allow for lower densities than the minimum required on certain blocks, no density on any given block within the project area should be lower than 17 dwelling units to the acre. This would ensure that the desired housing types developed on the subject site remain consistent with the vision of Communications Hill Specific Plan.

Policy Consistency

Conformance to the 2020 General Plan

The proposed text amendment is consistent with the San José 2020 General Plan Land Use/Transportation Diagram designation of Communications Hill Planned Community (CHPC) with a specific use designation for multi-family residential units. The objective of the CHPC is to provide a comprehensive planning framework for development of a very high-density residential, pedestrian-oriented, urban community with a mix of uses on and around the hill.

Conformance to the Communications Hill Specific Plan

The Communications Hill Specific Plan (CHSP) was specifically designed to provide a mix of housing types. This was to create more diverse neighborhoods and enable people of differing incomes to live within the neighborhoods. The CHSP permits up to 4,000 units of residential development and requires a density of at least 24 units per net developable acre on each block. The Specific Plan states that lower or higher densities may be permitted on individual sites within a block provided that the block average remains at a minimum of 24 units per acre and a maximum of 40 units per acre.

The proposed text amendment would be consistent with the goals of the CHSP to provide product and density diversity. The subject site has been specifically planned for multi-family development. Aside from a potential reduction to the 24 unit per acre minimum density per block, the overall density of larger 60.2-acre site (Dairy Hill) would be required to meet the minimum density requirement. The proposed text amendment conforms to all other aspects of the intent of the CHSP.

Environmental Review

The subject text amendment is consistent with the findings of the Final Environmental Impact Report for the Communications Hill Specific Plan, resolution no. 63624, certified on April 7, 1992.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The property owners within the project boundaries and/or property owners within a 1000-foot radius were sent a newsletter regarding the two community meetings that were held on July 8 and 10, 2002. They also received a hearing notice of the public hearings to be held on the subject amendment before the Planning Commission in August and City Council in September. In addition, the Department's web-site contains information regarding the General Plan process, amendments, staff reports, and hearing schedule. This site is used by the community to keep

informed with the status of the amendments. No comments were received by the public regarding the proposed amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

Planning staff recommends approval of the proposed text amendment.

Attachments

\\PBCE002\GP_Team\2002 Annual Review\Staff Reports\Summer Review\GPT02-07-06.doc

PROPOSED TEXT AMENDMENT

Amend Chapter 3.2.b – Communications Hill Specific Plan; Land Use; Multi-Family Housing; Design Standards as follows:

1. **Pg. 58, Paragraph 2:**
Design Standards

Density

The Horizon 2000 General Plan states that multi-family housing on Communications Hill should range in density between 25 to 40 units per acre. The Specific Plan permits up to 4000 units for all residential development and requires a density of at least 24 units per net developable acre on each block. Lower or higher densities may be permitted on individual sites within a block provided that the block average remains at a minimum of 24 units per acre and a maximum of 40 units per acre. Due to topographic/geologic constraints, limited exceptions for the few blocks generally bounded by streets “2”, “K”, “4” and “M” may be given consideration to develop at a density below the required minimum 24 dwelling unit per acre (i.e., no lower than 17 DU/AC). Such exceptions to the minimum density requirement shall be within the context of a single A(PD) rezoning application for “Dairy Hill”. Development on the remaining blocks for the “Dairy Hill” site should be developed at the higher end of the 24-40 dwelling unit per acre range in order to achieve the intent of the Multi-Family Residential designation.